

Recount Purpose: Deep Features

Key characteristics of the deep features of "recount" purpose writing.

asTTLe manual Chapter 2

Audience Awareness and Purpose:

- The writer aims to **inform or entertain** a reader or listener by reconstructing a view of the world that the reader can enter.
- Recounts centre on the **sequenced retelling of experience**, whether real or imagined.
- There are **three common types** of recount that have variations in focus.
 - a) **Personal recounts** involve the reconstruction of a personal experience that often includes reflections on the writer's feelings.
 - b) **Factual recounts** involve the recounting of events from an informational perspective ("A visit to McDonalds") and often include statements of observation as asides to the recounting of events ("The ice-cream machine behind the counter is big and shiny. I saw people polishing it. It takes a lot of work to keep it that shiny").
 - c) **Imaginative recounts** may involve the writer in recounting events from an imagined perspective ("A day in the life of a Viking raider") or recounting imagined events from a personal perspective ("A field trip to Mars") that may include both imagined observation and comment.

Content/Ideas:

- Recounts use a succinct orientating device early in the piece to **introduce characters, settings and events** to be recounted (i.e., **who, what, why, where, when, how**).
- A **point of view**, the perspective from which the recount is told, is often established here. Events are related in **time order**.
- Comment or observation and/or reflection is used to **foreground events** or details of significance to the writer. These may be interwoven with the **retelling**.
- Optional is a re-orientation that is an **ending statement** often used to reflect or comment on the events recounted or to predict future events ("I had a great time at Camp Hupua. I wonder what will happen to us next year!").

Structure/Organisation:

- Recounts are organised around a **sequenced account of events or happenings**.
- They follow a time sequence in that they are **organised through time** (i.e., conjunctions and adverbials show linkages in setting events in time and ordering the events and the passage of time).

Language Resources:

- **Specific people, places, and events** are named ("On Saturday, our class had a sleepover at Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World in Auckland" or "Today, we raided Lindisfarne Abbey to gather more gold for our longboat").
- Detailed recounting makes extensive use of **descriptive verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and idiomatic language** to catch and maintain reader interest.
- There is frequent use of **prepositional phrases, adverbials, and adjectivals** to **contextualise** the events that unfold.
- **Dialogue or direct speech** is often used to give the recount a "realistic" feel, to assist in the reconstruction of the events, or to provide opportunities to comment on the happenings.
- Many **action verbs** tell of happenings and of the behaviours of those involved. Some relational verbs are used to tell how things are as the writer reflects, observes or comments. The choice and use of vocabulary often reflects the desire to create particular images or feelings for the reader. Verbs are commonly in the past tense, though tense can vary in the comments ("On Tuesday, Mary and I went to the shop. We are best friends.").